



# 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

## Policies and Procedures

### Planned Tasks for 2012:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Office of Civil Rights (OCR):**

- Develop and post an annual training calendar on the intranet that includes a monthly schedule for all Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training programs and workshops by January 2012.
- Acquire or develop and distribute a desk reference for managers on special hiring authorities and flexibilities by February 2012.
- Develop and implement recruitment procedures that will address deficiencies in the employment of Hispanics and persons/veterans with disabilities by the end of March 2012.

#### **Human Capital Office (HCO):**

- Develop and post a training calendar on the intranet that includes a monthly schedule for all HCO training programs and workshops by December 31, 2011.

### Accomplishments Narrative:<sup>2</sup>

#### **OCR:**

OCR posted a training calendar on the Region 5 Intranet during the second quarter and updated the calendar on a quarterly basis and as training opportunities were developed and scheduled.

Throughout the year, the Regional Administrator, through the Director of the Office of Civil Rights and the EEO Officer, reiterated her support for the agency's EEO Policy Statement through e-mail announcements, cultural events, and training classes. The Regional EEO Policy will be issued/updated within thirty days of any update of the agency's EEO Policy Statement.

OCR has acquired the Office of Personnel Management VetGuide and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ABCs of Schedule A for the Hiring Manager and intends to distribute them to managers during training sessions and meetings in FY 2013. OCR is prepared to work with Cincinnati's Shared Service Center and the Department of Veterans Affairs on development of a veterans hiring presentation once the agency's hiring restrictions are relaxed.

<sup>1</sup> To be filled out and submitted to OCR by December 15, 2011

<sup>2</sup> To be filled out and submitted to OCR by October 30, 2012



## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

The EEO Officer received formal barrier analysis training in July of 2012. In the future, particularly after receiving access to applicant flow data, Region 5 will be able to accurately identify and begin to address deficiencies with employment of underrepresented categories of individuals.

**HCO:**

While training was scheduled and conducted in FY 2012, HCO will post a training calendar on the Region 5 Intranet in FY 2013. Additionally, a focus group was established and met on May 30, 2012 for Supervisor Onboarding training in Labor & Employee Relations (L/ER). The modules from the First Line Supervisor Network Training are scheduled to be presented in a classroom forum, to begin in November of 2012 and continue quarterly thereafter.





## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

### Complaints Processing and Procedures

#### Planned Tasks for 2012:<sup>1</sup>

##### **OCR:**

- Work to lower the processing time of informal EEO complaints so that it is kept to thirty days or less.
- Utilize all available tracking systems and procedures and conduct quarterly reviews of EEO complaints to ensure timeliness and effective resolutions.
- Improve the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution by providing clear guidance and training to managers, starting in January 2012.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the EEO Counselors by emphasizing policy and providing guidance at regularly held meetings. (On-going)

##### **HCO:**

- Implement a tracking system and conduct quarterly reviews of pending grievances to ensure timeliness and effective resolutions.

##### **Employee Services Branch (ESB):**

- Implement a tracking system and conduct quarterly reviews of reasonable accommodation requests to ensure timeliness and effective resolutions.

#### **Accomplishments Narrative:**<sup>2</sup>

##### **OCR:**

The average processing time for informal EEO cases has been significantly reduced over the past five fiscal years, from 137 days in FY 2008 to 45.3 days in FY 2012. OCR will continue to improve its processing time performance through use of the new Centralized EEO Counseling Program, through continued guidance, education, and training for managers on how to prevent and respond to EEO complaints, and through educating employees about potential resolution of EEO issues at the earliest opportunities.

During FY 2012, in addition to Regional record-keeping, OCR input EEO case data into iComplaints, a new national tracking system.

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## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

During FY 2012, OCR provided ADR-specific guidance within its general EEO training sessions for supervisors and for employees. OCR incorporated the changes to the EEO Counseling Process and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Process that were instituted by decision-makers at Headquarters. OCR will continue to provide guidance to managers about the requirement to participate in ADR when it is deemed appropriate by the agency and elected by complainants. Additionally, L/ER provided an ADR presentation for supervisors and managers.

For the first three quarters of the fiscal year, the Region 5 EEO Officer met with the EEO Counselors on a monthly basis to stress processing time, consistency of work product, and general effectiveness. He also provided training through review and discussion of various EEO scenarios.

### **HCO:**

In October of 2011, HCO revised the L/ER tracking system that was implemented during the previous fiscal year. This system allows for tracking of Freedom of Information Act requests, union requests for information, and employee grievances in a real-time format that is updated frequently, as activities occur in the process. The tracking system results in a more immediate response to requests than in the past.

L/ER and the Office of Regional Counsel established bi-weekly meetings to improve customer services and time commitments.

### **ESB:**

ESB implemented a tracking system that draws on the Reasonable Accommodation Database and has resulted in reduced processing times despite delays in the interactive process and stalled decision making.





## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

### *Special Emphasis Programs and Outreach*

#### **Planned Tasks for 2012:<sup>1</sup>**

##### **OCR:**

- Improve the effectiveness of the Special Emphasis Programs (SEP) by emphasizing policy and providing guidance at regularly held meetings with the SEP Managers.
- Improve use of the Event/Conference toolkit in order to streamline event planning and production by providing guidance and reminders to SEP Managers.
- In conjunction with the SEP Managers, develop a calendar of all Minority Academic Institution (MAI) job fairs, as well as job fairs that target veterans and persons with disabilities and post this schedule to the intranet by December 30, 2011.
- Integrate SEP Managers into the MAI activities by having them assist in obtaining and scheduling speakers and lecturers for seminars/classes held at the MAI.
- Ensure that there are one or two Faculty Fellows in Region 5 annually by providing timely information to decision makers and emphasizing the importance of MAI participation to management.
- Increase senior management participation from FY 2011 in commemorative observances, cultural awareness, and SEP.

##### **HCO:**

- In January 2012, implement the second year of the EPA-sponsored Science Colloquium with Northside College Preparatory High School, expand participation to Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, and propose continued expansion of the program for FY 2013.

#### **Accomplishments Narrative:<sup>2</sup>**

##### **OCR:**

OCR met with the SEP Managers on a monthly basis, emphasizing processes and providing guidance. This communication included development of a SEP work plan.

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## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

The SEP Manager Standard Operating Procedures, which includes the Event/Conference toolkit, were reviewed and revised in September of 2012 and will be implemented in FY 2013.

In February of 2012, a MAI Job Fair Calendar was developed and posted to the Intranet. During FY 2012, Regional staff attended three job fairs at MAIs located within the Region.

SEP Managers assisted the MAI Coordinator with identifying subject matter expert speakers for MAI events. This participation helped ensure that speakers were appropriate for the target audiences.

During FY 2012, OCR began to integrate the SEP Managers into MAI outreach efforts. SEP Managers assisted at four MAI events, describing positions at EPA and Regional programs.

OCR reminded senior managers about their important visible role in multi-agency cultural events. OCR worked with SEP Managers and senior managers to promote attendance and active participation at cultural events.

### **HCO:**

HCO implemented the second year of the Science Colloquium at Northside College Preparatory High School and the first year of the Colloquium with Walter Payton College Preparatory High School. The program was evaluated as extremely successful by faculty and students at both schools. Teachers also reported that several students' scores on Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science exams were higher as a direct result of participating in the Colloquium. HCO received interest from three other schools that wanted to enter into the Colloquium.





## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

### Disability Program

#### Planned Tasks for 2012:<sup>1</sup>

##### **OCR:**

- Expand outreach to organizations to encourage application for federal employment with the goal of increasing the hiring percentage of persons/veterans with disabilities.
- Increase the Region's compliance with Executive Orders 13518 and 13548, as well as other Executive Orders by increasing representation of veterans with disabilities in the workplace through at least two new hires.
- Provide managers with training and tools that allow them to efficiently use direct-hiring authorities to recruit and hire veterans and applicants with disabilities.
- Provide college students who have disabilities and are enrolled in environmental fields of study with mentoring/job shadowing opportunities designed to help them understand environmental careers.
- Provide veterans who have disabilities with short-term, non-paid internship opportunities designed to lead to direct-hire employment, increasing their representation in the workplace.

#### **Accomplishments Narrative:**<sup>2</sup>

##### **OCR:**

OCR worked with the Department of Veterans Affairs non-paid disabled veteran intern program to place seven veterans with disabilities throughout the Region. Due to extremely limited external hiring, no new veterans with disabilities were placed into permanent positions.

OCR has acquired the Office of Personnel Management VetGuide and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ABCs of Schedule A for the Hiring Manager and intends to distribute them to managers during training sessions and meetings in FY 2013.

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Region 5

### *Diversity and Workplace Best Practices*

#### Planned Tasks for 2012:<sup>1</sup>

##### **OCR:**

- Improve diversity in recruitment, promotions, and management ranks by addressing barriers in the hiring of Hispanics, persons with disabilities, and veterans.
- Develop a State of the Region report that summarizes how the Region is progressing in employment of persons from under-represented groups.
- Institutionalize a Region-wide education program through focused discussions with Regional Division management on EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, the NO FEAR Act, and the requirements of MD 715.
- Develop a strategic communication plan to share information with all Region 5 employees using various resources, such as the Internet, posters, brochures, and electronic media.

#### Accomplishments Narrative:<sup>2</sup>

##### **OCR:**

Region 5 met the national standards for employment of persons with disabilities. Region 5 also worked with the Veterans' Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Office and placed seven veterans in non-paid intern positions with the hope that the EPA experience would lead them to success in a paid position.

Due to development of the Diversity Dashboard, employment demographic information was provided to the Region via a quarterly report. Due to the hiring pause, limited hiring was completed in FY 2012, however, Region 5 increased its number of Hispanic employees by 5.3% by the end of the third quarter.

In lieu of a nationwide training program that is in the midst of planning at Headquarters, Region 5 conducted several of its own training sessions for supervisors on Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment Prevention and EEO Considerations and Challenges. Region 5 also aggressively promoted mandatory NO FEAR Act training and was the first Region to achieve a 100% completion rate.

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## 2012 MD 715 Action Plan

Region 5

The Region celebrated monthly events for all SEP and Diversity Program groups. OCR worked closely with SEP managers to attract more participation through better planning. Reminders of cultural events were posted on the Intranet and sent via voicemail and e-mail. A banner was also produced for showcase in the hallways or on stage that highlighted each particular month of cultural awareness.